

The Thirties

to keep its National character their continued membership of it was essential.

Seats had to be found for them, and as none of their National Labour supporters showed any readiness to vacate theirs, other possibilities were considered. The convenient death of the member for Combined Scottish Universities necessitated a by-election, which, it was thought, might provide MacDonald with an opportunity to return to the House of Commons. He was a Scotsman himself, and had shown himself ever zealous for education in all its branches. What could be more fitting, then, than that he should represent in Parliament the learning and the learned of his native land? At first the proposal was not kindly received. *The Glasgow Herald* complained that MacDonald was 'an unsuitable candidate in every respect,' and that 'the way in which he has been practically forced upon the Universities is deplorable,' going on to remark that 'if universities are to be a happy hunting-ground for politicians who cannot find seats elsewhere/ their special parliamentary representation would soon be without any justification. It was also recalled that MacDonald had himself in 1931 spoken in favour of abolishing the right to an extra vote of 'those who become graduates and have to pay, I think .£1 for it'; 'If,' he had said then, 'you want materialism at its very worst, masquerading under the most sacred guise, you find it in the universities for generations'; and here he was four years later appealing in the name of Scotland, the 'auld mither* to this masquerading materialism, to support his parliamentary

candidature. Thanks largely to Mr. Baldwin's
astute manage-
ment, his appeal, despite its unfavourable
circumstances, was not
made in vain. Combined Scottish
Universities took what
Seaham Harbour had rejected, and returned him
with a com-
fortable majority. Thenceforth, he languished,
talking vaguely
of going through his papers and preparing an
account of the
momentous events in which he had been
concerned, but never
doing so, and scarcely comforted any longer by the
thought that
duchesses would welcome an embrace from
him, if indeed
(which was improbable) they still would. He left
for one more